



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department Of Agriculture Rural Development
Rm 152 Federal Building 100 Centennial Mall North Lincoln, NE 68508
(402) 437-5551 (Phone) (402) 437-5408 (Fax) (402) 437-5093 (TDY)

Cliff Kumm, Beatrice, Neb. (402) 223-3125 Ext. 4

ENERGY APPLICATION DATE EXTENDED!

Lincoln, Nebraska, March 1, 2006— Farmers, ranchers, irrigators and rural businesses located in communities with populations 50,000 or less, are encouraged to make application for renewable energy and energy efficiency improvement projects. USDA Rural Development anticipates the availability of approximately \$22 million in grants and guaranteed budget authority under the USDA 9006 energy program.

Applications are received and considered on an open and continuing basis. An initial round of energy applications in Nebraska were received through March 1, 2006. **An extended final date for applications to be accepted is May 12, 2006.** Submit applications to the USDA Rural Development specialist in your area.

Monies are available for renewable energy systems such as wind, solar, biomass, biogas, or geothermal sources or hydrogen derived from biomass or water using wind, solar, or geothermal energy sources. Funding is also available for energy efficiency improvement projects such as improvements to HVAC systems, insulation, refrigeration, lighting, pumping systems, air systems, motor systems, irrigation systems, etc. Businesses interested in energy efficiency improvements to their facilities or renewable energy projects should look at the program for potential funding assistance. Farmers and ranchers should also consider this program for renewable or energy efficiency projects for irrigation system energy improvements, methane digesters for livestock waste, grain handling systems, wind turbines, solar systems, biomass systems, etc.

Grants are available for commercially available or pre-commercially available technologies for up to 25 percent of eligible project costs. Renewable energy system requests can be considered for a grant minimum of \$2,500 and maximum of \$500,000. Energy efficiency improvement requests can be for a grant minimum of \$1,500 and \$250,000 maximum.

Funding for this program is also available through guaranteed loans. Some projects and/or applicants may be eligible for a loan guarantee in lieu of or in combination with a grant. Visit with your Rural Development Specialist regarding your eligibility for guaranteed funding.

Contact USDA Rural Development representatives: Jan Knobel in Beatrice, (402) 223-3125 ext. 4 or (402) 446-7414; Dan Laska in Columbus, (402) 564-0506 ext. 4; Mary Gambill in Ainsworth, (402) 387-2242 ext. 4; Karissa Hagedorn in Kearney, (308) 237-3118 ext. 4; Tim Brooks in Scottsbluff, (308) 632-2195 ext. 4; Cliff Kumm or Deb Yocum in Beatrice (402) 223-3125 ext. 4; (402) 437-5093 (TDY). Visit <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/farmbill/index.html> or www.rurdev.usda.gov/ne for more program details.

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